

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/16/1791/FUL
1 Anchor Cottages, The Street, Walberswick IP18 6UA

20.05.2016

1 The application relates to the construction of vehicular access and parking spaces in the garden of 1 Anchor Cottages. At present, the house has no access from The Street and no on site parking.

2 The property is one of the pair of 18th century cottages which occupy a visible and public location in the Conservation Area opposite the Anchor Hotel. Projecting forward of the line of The Terrace to the east, Anchor Cottage and its garden can be seen at close hand and from a distance over the low garden walls which characterise this part of The Street.

The cottages are described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as 'unlisted buildings that contribute to the character of The Street'. The Appraisal also refers to the 'good quality cobble garden wall to The Street' which extends across the frontage of the two cottages and continues eastwards as a brick wall of similar height, enclosing the front gardens of The Terrace.

The effect is to create a unified and distinctive edge to The Street in this locality, broken only by small garden gates and the narrow entrances to the rear service way of The Terrace. A similar scale and pattern is maintained by the more varied enclosures of front gardens to the west.

The walls to Anchor Cottages and The Terrace are identified as 'important' on the Summary of Character Features plan attached to the Appraisal.

3 The proposal is to demolish about 40% of the cobble wall fronting 1 Anchor Cottages and rebuild with a new wall of similar style and construction, but realigned to form a splayed forecourt big enough to accommodate a car. The width of the forecourt at the kerb will be 6.5 metres but since it is also intended to demolish the boundary wall which separates the forecourt from the rear access way to the Terrace, the effective width of the combined openings will be more than 9 metres. This is comparable in scale to the access to the development at Alexandra Place.

Beyond the large field gate to the rear of the forecourt, the drive will extend into the back garden to provide grassed hard standing and turning space for two cars.

4 The Core Strategy of the Local Plan requires development within a Conservation Area to 'maintain and enhance the quality of the distinctive natural and built environment'. The Conservation Area Management Plan specifically refers to the importance of the street scene in determining the character of the Conservation Area and the detrimental effect of, amongst others, 'intrusive....driveways.... and other structures'

In this context, the Planning Advisory Group comments as follows:

- the alien scale and form of the proposal will destroy the unity and character of the street frontages described above.
- the scale and form of the opening and the new vehicular access to the rear will be detrimental to the setting of the cottage
- the loss of garden resulting from the construction of the forecourt and the driveway and the parking area to the rear will detract from the green and leafy quality of the environment.

The threat of further loss arising from the future expansion of the house, referred to in para 3.2 of the Design and Access Statement, is noted.

- The benefit of providing off street parking, which is claimed for the proposal, can very simply be achieved by renting spaces available to residents in the adjacent car park of the Village Hall.

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the proposal will be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area and is in conflict with the objectives of the Local Plan. For these reasons we consider it unacceptable.